



**U.S. Consulate General Chennai**

**Official Text**

Phone: +91-44-2857-4181 | Mail: [ChennaiPDPress@State.Gov](mailto:ChennaiPDPress@State.Gov)

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## **LARSEN AND TOUBRO (L&T) MASTER SHIP REPAIR AGREEMENT CEREMONY**

Remarks by U.S. Consul General in Chennai Judith Ravin – July 10, 2023

Good morning.

*[Acknowledge hosts]*

Last month, we saw a celebration of the bond between the world's two great democracies. During Prime Minister Modi's visit to the United States, he eloquently said, that "the scope of our cooperation is endless, and the chemistry of our relations is effortless." The announcements made during Prime Minister Modi's official state visit set a marker and highlighted incredible potential.

Today we celebrate one of those announcements, namely, that the U.S. Navy has reached a five-year Master Ship Repair Agreement (MSRA) with Larsen & Toubro (L&T) for your shipyard here in Kattupalli, Chennai. A landmark development and the first such agreement with L&T, the Master Ship Repair Agreement is a symbol of our strengthened U.S.-India partnership. The USNS Salvor marks the first U.S. vessel to conduct a mid-voyage repair at L&T under this agreement.

The MSRA is a legally non-binding arrangement between the U.S. Navy and private shipbuilding contractors to pre-approve shipyards to repair U.S. Naval vessels. The MSRA involves a rigorous vetting process. For instance, the contractor must be able to complete 55% or more of the work package of a vessel; own facilities; utilize its own shops and workforce; maintain a track record of a safe working environment; and be capable of subcontracting to provide adequate oversight of the voyage repair.

The MSRA will fast-track U.S. Government contracting processes for repair work and advances the Indian government's indigenous production and logistics goals. With MSRA certification, the L&T Kattupalli shipyard may bid on U.S. Navy and Military Sealift Command (MSC) ship repair contracts throughout the 7th Fleet area of responsibility.

Before this ceremony, I recalled past visits of our leaders to Larsen and Toubro Shipyard and the previous two successful voyage repairs: the USNS Charles Drew and USNS Matthew Perry. In 2022, both Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin and Secretary of State Antony Blinken expressed their intent to conduct maintenance in India during the U.S.-India 2+2

Ministerial Dialogue. The Master Ship Repair Agreement is a concrete deliverable of those initial visits to help our peoples and advance the bilateral relationship.

Today marks another step forward in Indian and U.S. maritime cooperation. The Master Ship Repair Agreement with Larsen and Toubro demonstrates how the U.S. Navy and Indian companies are better together for the advancement of our collective maritime security. By partnering to deliver economical and effective repair of U.S. Naval vessels, our shipping industries positively contribute to a free and open Indo-Pacific.

We can see the results of this partnership in every aspect of our relationship. I'd like to share a few statistics that reflect just how close our two countries are:

- The United States is India's largest trading partner, with more than \$191 billion dollars in two-way trade.
- India conducts more military exercises with the United States than it does with any other country.
- Prime Minister Modi was in the United States in June; and we are soon expecting President Biden's visit to India. That will make two highest level summits between our countries in a timespan of less than six months.

We are committed to operationalizing the U.S.-India Major Defense Partnership through enhanced information sharing, regional security cooperation, defense trade, and cooperation in new domains. I look forward to seeing the outcomes of this Master Ship Repair Agreement and where our partnership may go in the future.

I could not be more thrilled to be with you here today on this occasion. Thank you.

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